

## Miracles – Part I

Another book review for you.

You will all know the name CS Lewis – author of *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* but also a major Christian writer of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century.

'Miracles' was written in 1947. This was an important time in Christian thought because the second half of the Century was destined to be the Age of Science – and Lewis knew it. Only 2 years before, 2 Japanese cities had been reduced to ash by cutting edge military technology. And as biologists returned to their labs after war work, the word was that Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid was the stuff to watch. And so it would prove just 5 years hence.

Lewis saw a problem emerging from the Age of Science – if Christianity relied on Miracles for validation (as many were starting to argue) then it was no longer valid because Miracles were scientifically invalid. Thus we could move on from faith in Biblical stories and embrace the age of Science.

Lewis sets out to examine a world containing Nature, Supernature, and humankind. Nature is broadly that which can be explained, measured and altered by science. Supernature is what we call God, His work, and His characteristics. Supernature probably includes human virtues such as loyalty, compassion, sympathy, faith; in other words the human opposite of sin.

Lewis defines Miracles as Interventions by Supernature upon and in Nature, and discusses the Incarnation, Resurrection, and Ascension both in terms of God's Intervention, and in terms of humanity's response to those Interventions. He then discusses Christ's own Miracles, of which my RSV lists 28. He tackles their seeming improbability, especially in the light of what we call Science. He acknowledges the challenges faced by modern Christians;

'Water into Wine? Impossible! Prove it!'

The book's great strength is its ability to place us (humans with an awareness of God) centre-stage as key players, as participants as well as as witnesses.

In a few months' time, we will examine two possible contemporary Miracles, both relevant to New Zealand society as we know it today.

*Richard Swarbrick*